

Scotch Plains NJ

WHAT'S HAPPENING MONTHLY

Published by Renna Media, LLC. On-line at RennaMedia.com

Issue 126 • March 2026



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ROLLING THE DICE WITH THE MUSICAL GUYS AND DOLLS

Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School Repertory Theatre is thrilled to present *Guys and Dolls*, the beloved Broadway musical that brings together gamblers, showgirls, and unlikely romances in a colorful, high-energy celebration of love and luck. Featuring music and lyrics by Frank Loesser and based on the classic stories of Damon Runyon, *Guys and Dolls* is widely regarded as one of the greatest American musicals of all time. Tickets are on sale now at spfhsrep.com.

Set in a vibrant, colorful world of 1950s New York City, *Guys and Dolls* follows high-rolling gambler Sky Masterson, perpetually engaged gambler Nathan Detroit, and the strong-willed women who challenge their assumptions about love, faith, and redemption. Packed with iconic numbers such as "Luck Be a Lady," "Sit Down, You're Rockin' the Boat," and "A Bushel and a Peck," the show features sharp comedy, touching romance, and infectious music.

"*Guys and Dolls* is a perfect blend of classic Broadway charm and big-hearted storytelling," shared Director Morgan Knight. "It's joyful, stylish, and endlessly entertaining. Everything fun about classic musical theatre can be found in *Guys and Dolls*." The production will transform the Manya Ungar Memorial Auditorium into a stylized vision of New York City, complete with bustling street scenes, neon-lit nightclubs, and dynamic choreography. Audiences can expect bold visuals, polished musical performances, and an ensemble-driven production that highlights the talents of SPFHS's student performers and technicians.

Guys and Dolls features over 100 students in the cast, orchestra, and crew, and is guided by a creative team including:

- Morgan Knight (Director)
- Kelly Ruggieri (Producer)
- Brent Geyer (Music Director)
- Kyra Robinson (Choreographer)
- Trey Shore (Orchestra Director)
- Joseph Napolitano (Set Designer)
- Evan Perrotta (Technical Director)
- Christian Confalone (Lighting Designer)
- and Joanne Sprague (Costume Designer)



(above) The cast of SPFHS Repertory Theatre's production of *Guys and Dolls*

Courtesy Photo

Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School presents **Guys and Dolls**

Performance Schedule:

Thursday, March 12 at 7:00 PM

Friday, March 13 at 7:00 PM

Saturday, March 14 at 7:00 PM

Sunday, March 15 at 2:00 PM

All performances will be held in
Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School's
Manya Ungar Memorial Auditorium
667 Westfield Rd, Scotch Plains, NJ

The show runs approximately 2 hours and 30 minutes including one intermission, and is appropriate for general audiences – kids and grandparents alike!

Tickets are on sale now at spfhsrep.com

Tickets: Prices: \$18 (adults) \$16 (staff, students, & seniors)

For ticketing inquiries, contact

Rosa Estevez at SPFHSPayTickets@gmail.com or 908-935-7796

SPFHS is committed to accessibility: Accessible seating is available for patrons with mobility needs (please contact Rosa Estevez in advance at SPFHSPayTickets@gmail.com).

Handicap parking is located near Door 1 and is first-come, first-served for vehicles displaying official placards or license plates. In select cases, early seating accommodations can be arranged.

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Renna Media, LLC, Publishers
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PRESENTATION FEATURES EIGHT NOTABLE NEW JERSEY WOMEN - MARCH 24TH

Historical Society of Scotch Plains and Fanwood

These women, whose names are etched in history, continue to make a significant impact on society. From literature and education to medicine, business and women's rights, their influence and legacy extend far beyond the borders of New Jersey.

Clara Barton, an educator before she became a renowned nurse, opened one of the state's free public schools. Mabel Smith Douglass, the first Dean of NJ College for Women in New Brunswick, was honored with the college's name, Douglass College. Lucy Stone and Alice Stokes Paul were prominent suffragists. However, how many are familiar with the poet Annis Boudinot Stockton or the businesswoman Sara Spencer Washington? Rounding out the list are Mary Philbrook, an accomplished attorney, and Clara Maass, another remarkable nurse.

The Historical Society of Scotch Plains and Fanwood is delighted to have Marylou Morano Kjelle present these eight remarkable women, their accomplishments and their profound impact. Kjelle is a well-published author in the children's nonfiction book market and is now venturing into the adult market with two upcoming books in 2026: "Notable Nurses" and "Trauma in the Garden State." Her diverse background includes being a former lecturer, English professor and reporter for the Westfield

Leader/Times of Scotch Plains-Fanwood. Given her extensive experience and expertise, she promises to be a dynamic and captivating speaker.

As March is celebrated as "Women's Month," this program is particularly timely. The Historical Society of Scotch Plains and Fanwood invites you to attend this free and open-to-the-public meeting. There is no need for registration—just come and join us! The meeting will commence on Tuesday, March 24th starts at 7:30 p.m. and will be held at the historic Shady Rest Golf Club, located at 820 Jerusalem Road (corner of Plainfield Ave.) in Scotch Plains. Refreshments and fellowship will be provided after the presentation. For further information, contact Connie Klock at 908-337-7735.

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CANNONBALL HOUSE OPENS MARCH 1ST

The Osborn Cannonball House Museum, located at 1840 Front Street in Scotch Plains, will be open to the public from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Sunday, March 1, 2026.

The museum is currently presenting a Civil War exhibit featuring gowns from the mid 19th century. Although Scotch Plains was not the site of a Civil War battle, many residents fought in the four year conflict and the town participated in national events to support Union Troops. New Jersey supplied over 88,000 soldiers throughout the war and New Jersey soldiers were present in every major battle.

Costumed docents will be available to give tours of the c. 1750 house once owned by the Osborn family whose sons fought locally in the American Revolution. Come visit our town's Revolutionary War era museum and hear stories of the exciting early history of Scotch Plains and its role in the founding of our great country.

As always, there is no fee to attend. The Osborn Cannonball House is open for tours on the first Sunday of each month (except January and February) and by appointment by calling (908) 322-6700, Ext. 230. If you are interested in volunteering at the museum, please email us at Info@HistoricalSocietySPFNJ.org. No prior experience required.




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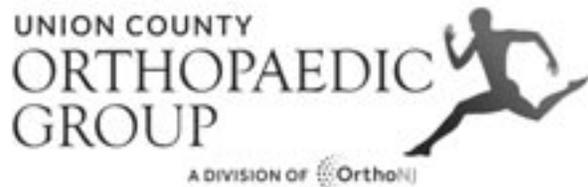
CHANGE MAKER STUDENTS PRESENT CARE PACKAGES FOR VETS

VFW Post 2230

James Maranca presented Commander Jeans of VFW Post 2230 in Kenilworth, with care packages for veterans. James and his classmate Romie Robinson (not pictured) are 8th grade students at Nettingham Middle School in Scotch Plains. They are in a Change Maker's course, which centers on students completing a service of some kind. James and Romie chose to make care packages for veterans and carefully chose items that they thought our veterans would enjoy having. They assembled the packages and dropped them off at the Kenilworth VFW. Commander Jeans commended the boys on a job well done and assured them the veterans will certainly enjoy the packages.



Courtesy Photo



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LUCKY DAYS AHEAD AT THE SPRING SALES

JOIN US FOR FLAMENCO! MARCH 16

The College Club of Fanwood-Scotch Plains, in collaboration with the SPFHS World Language department and students, welcomes all to an exciting program on March 16, 2026 at 7:30 p.m. to experience the beautiful Alborada Spanish Dance Theater who will perform Flamenco dance. This program will be held at Terrill Middle School Auditorium located at 1301 Terrill Road in Scotch Plains. This Flamenco program is free and open to the public. Hospitality will be offered after the program.

Founded in 1965 by Maria Alba, Alborada Dance Company continues to thrive as a nonprofit devoted to their mission of honoring the multicultural structure of Spanish culture through educational and entertaining performances. On average, Alborada reaches between 11,000-15,000 people annually through their programs. With an estimated 30% of the TriState population having Hispanic heritage, the importance of honoring the rich diversity of Spanish cultural heritage is crucial.

For more information on this engaging public event, or to learn more about the College Club of Fanwood-Scotch Plains, please visit our website fspcollegeclub.org.

Fanwood-Scotch Plains Thrift Shop

Starting March 17, the “Luck of the Irish” will be with shoppers at the Fanwood-Scotch Plains Thrift Shop! That’s the first day that the store will be restocked with merchandise perfect for the upcoming season, from spring décor to clothing suitable for the warmer weather ahead.

Savvy shoppers will find spring clothing for

males and females in sizes ranging from infants to adults. Shop for tops and bottoms, dresses, jackets, shoes, accessories and more, some brand-new and ALL in good condition. Find household items, toys and home décor that will perk up your spring and summer porch. It’s time to enliven your living space or put the finishing touches on your holiday tables with merchandise that will be consistently re-stocked as the spring season progresses.

Plus, if you are looking to help the cause of re-using items that still have a purpose, please consider donating things from your own closets for re-sale at the Thrift Shop. That merchandise will get a new lease on life through others that need and/or will treasure them. Once in the shop chances are good that you will also find some terrific items for your own use, too.

Donations to the Thrift Shop at 1741 Easât Second Street, Scotch Plains are accepted during our normal store operating hours: Tuesday through Friday from 10:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., and Saturday 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. All store proceeds outside of operating expenses are donated by the Fanwood-Scotch Plains Service League to local non-profit organizations or used for student scholarships.

Learn more about the Service League call the store at: 908-322-5420. Visit the web site (scotchplains thriftshop.weebly.com) or search the “Fanwood-Scotch Plains Service League” on Facebook



(above) Refresh your home with spring décor from the Fanwood-Scotch Plains Thrift Shop.

Courtesy Photo

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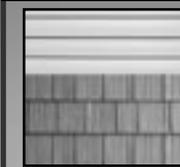
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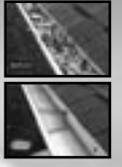
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POLICE CHIEF JEFF BRIEL RECEIVES CEREMONIAL FINAL WALK OUT



(above) Scotch Plains Police Chief Jeff Briel

Courtesy Photo

Scotch Plains Township

Retiring Scotch Plains Police Chief Jeff Briel received a warm goodbye on Friday, January 30th, as officers and Township officials lined up to salute him after his final day on the job. The ceremony, known as a "clap out," was a celebratory send-off for Briel, who served in law enforcement for more than 30 years. Briel worked in a variety of roles in Scotch Plains, including training officer, narcotics detective, patrol assignments and administrative leadership, earning promotions through the ranks and was appointed to Chief in 2023.

Scotch Plains Police Department's Farewell:

Today (January 30th), we recognize and

celebrate the retirement of Chief Jeff Briel.

Thank you for 33 years of dedicated service to law enforcement, including 31 years serving the residents of Scotch Plains. Your leadership, professionalism, and unwavering commitment to this community have left a lasting impact on this department and everyone who had the privilege to serve alongside you.

Today, we say farewell to a great leader, a trusted mentor, and an absolute legend. Chief Briel's legacy will continue to guide this agency for years to come.

We wish you nothing but the very best in your well-earned retirement. Enjoy this next chapter—you've earned it.



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Scotch Plains Township

The Scotch Plains Township Council recently recognized the SPF PAL 8th Grade “A” Level Football Team and Cheerleading Squad for their roles in the Raiders’ undefeated 2025 season and NJSYFL “A” Division Super Bowl Championship.

The football team finished the regular season 8–0 and captured the title with a dramatic 30–24 overtime victory over Old Bridge, while the cheerleaders provided consistent sideline support throughout the regular season, playoffs and championship game.

Township officials noted the squads’ resilience during high-pressure moments, including a playoff win over Westfield and an overtime championship performance. The Council also acknowledged the leadership of the coaching staffs and the support of families and volunteers throughout the season.

Officials congratulated both squads on their accomplishments and wished the student-athletes continued success as they advance to high school.





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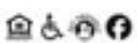


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The parishes of St. Bartholomew the Apostle, Immaculate Heart of Mary in Scotch Plains along with the Church of the Little Flower Berkley Heights and St. James the Apostle Springfield are inviting men of all ages to attend this year's Men's Cornerstone XVII retreat. It will be on Friday March 6th and Saturday March 7th and held at St. Bartholomew in Scotch Plains.

WHAT IS CORNERSTONE?

Cornerstone is an opportunity to hit the "pause button" in life and a chance to renew and strengthen your faith and grow in your experience in the Christian faith. It is led by a team of parishioners from various backgrounds and ages who themselves have experienced an increased presence of Christ in their lives.

WHY SHOULD I ATTEND CORNERSTONE?

You will have a unique opportunity to meet other men of the community and together listen, reflect, and share real life experiences. Taking the time to retreat from daily routine and stress is both a necessary and rewarding experience.

WHAT DOES "CORNERSTONE" MEAN?

The word "Cornerstone" describes Christ as the main foundation ("the cornerstone") of our lives. His presence within us allows us to live, grow, and become more loving and vibrant people of God.

What can I expect at Cornerstone? It will begin on Friday evening March 6th at 6 p.m. and end on Saturday evening March 7th after Mass and dinner. There will be talks, followed by small group discussions, time for quiet personal reflection, Reconciliation, and Eucharist.

REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED.

Please visit the web sites of either St. Bartholomew the Apostle at stbartholomewchurch.org/mens-cornerstone or Immaculate Heart of Mary at ihmparish.net. You may also reach out to the co-directors: Jim Brennan 908-337-6874, jpbrennan1946@gmail.com; Jose Montero 201-310-4278, josegomezmontero@hotmail.com; or Pat Cetera 908-230-7282, ceteras4@verizon.net.

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YOUTH SYMPHONY REHEARSALS FREE AND OPEN TO PUBLIC - MARCH 1-5



The New Jersey Youth Symphony (NJYS), a program of Wharton Arts, invites young musicians and their families to experience the excitement of ensemble music-making during the NJYS Open Rehearsals Week, taking place March 1-5, 2026.

Throughout the week, visitors are welcome to observe live rehearsals of any of NJYS's 15 ensembles, offering a rare behind-the-scenes look at how young musicians collaborate, learn, and grow under the guidance of NJYS's accomplished artistic staff. Open Rehearsals Week is designed for students in grades 2-11 who are curious about joining a youth orchestra or expanding their musical journey.

Attendees will have the opportunity to meet NJYS conductors, experience the rehearsal process firsthand, and explore how NJYS nurtures musical excellence, teamwork, and confidence in young performers.

Said Artistic Director and Principal Conductor Helen Cha-Pyo, "At the New Jersey Youth Symphony, we hold our students to the highest standards of musical excellence and artistry because they are capable of extraordinary things. At the same time, our core mission goes beyond performance. We want our students to experience the profound connection between music and life, and to understand the power of music as a force for service, empathy, and community building. Open Rehearsals Week is an open invitation to parents, educators, and students to step inside our rehearsal rooms, feel the joy of our community, and witness the 'serious fun' that happens when young people make music together with purpose,

passion, and heart."

NJYS is one of New Jersey's premier youth orchestra programs, serving talented young musicians from across the region through a comprehensive range of ensembles and educational experiences. Open Rehearsals Week reflects NJYS's commitment to access, education, and artistic excellence.

Attendance is free, but advance registration is encouraged. Registration and additional information available at NJYS.org.

ABOUT THE NEW JERSEY YOUTH SYMPHONY

The New Jersey Youth Symphony (NJYS), a program of Wharton Arts, provides exceptional orchestral and ensemble training to young musicians in grades 2-12. Through a wide range of ensembles, performances, and educational opportunities, NJYS fosters musical excellence, collaboration, and a lifelong appreciation for the arts.

Wharton Arts' mission is to offer accessible, high quality performing arts education that sparks personal growth and builds inclusive communities. Wharton Arts' vision is for a transformative performing arts education in an inclusive community to be accessible for everyone.

Wharton Arts is located in Berkeley Heights, New Providence, and Paterson, NJ and reaches students from 12 counties. All of Wharton Arts' extraordinary teaching artists, faculty members, and conductors hold degrees in their teaching specialty and have been vetted and trained to enable our students to achieve their personal best.

Scotch Plains Volunteer Rescue Squad Tip DID YOU KNOW THAT YOU CAN TEXT 911?

Call If You Can, Text If You Can't. If you're ever in an emergency situation but unable to place a call, you can now text 911.

It's easy: Using any cell phone, open a new text message and type 911 as the recipient. Then text your name and the address of your location, and describe the type of help you need.

If you ever find yourself in a situation where silence is a matter of safety, such as a home invasion or a domestic dispute, texting allows you to summon help without alerting an offender. It also works in areas with weak cellular reception, where a simple text message can often "sneak through" when a voice call might fail to connect.

This service is also a major improvement for accessibility, allowing members of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community, as well as those with speech impairments, to communicate directly for help.

Please remember to start your text with who you are and where you are. Dispatchers may not always be able to automatically determine your location. They need you to confirm your address so that they can send help as soon as possible.

Already, 60% of 911 call centers in the USA provide text-to-911 services. While Scotch Plains (and all of Union County) are covered, others are not. To check if a town offers text-to-911, go to <https://text911.info>.

If interested in donating, volunteering, or finding out more about Scotch Plains Volunteer Rescue Squad, go to ScotchPlainsRescueSquad.com or visit its Facebook page.

*Contributing Author: Christian Hansis,
a member of the Scotch Plains
Volunteer Rescue Squad.*

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UNICO WINE TASTING FUNDRAISER - MARCH 27

The Greater Westfield UNICO Chapter is proud to present its Spring Wine Tasting, an elegant and enjoyable charity event designed to bring together wine enthusiasts and community supporters for a night of great tastes and good causes. The event will take place on Friday, March 27, 2026, from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. at the Columbian Club, 2400 North Avenue in Scotch Plains, NJ.

Guests are invited to sip, savor, and celebrate spring while sampling a curated selection of wines, spirits and beer and enjoying appetizers in a relaxed and festive atmosphere. The tasting promises a wonderful opportunity to explore beverages, mingle, and enjoy the vibrant energy of the season. Wine will be available for purchase at a discounted price at this special event.

Proceeds from the event will directly benefit the local charitable activities including student scholarships supported by the Greater Westfield UNICO Chapter. As part of UNICO National, the largest Italian-American service organization in the United States, the chapter is committed to "Service Above Self"—promoting Italian-American heritage and providing meaningful support to educational, cultural, and charitable causes in the community.

"Our Spring Wine Tasting is more than just an evening of great wine — it's a chance for neighbors and supporters to gather for a meaningful cause," said Gene Jannotti, President of the UNICO Westfield Chapter. "Every ticket purchased helps further our mission of service, community outreach, and support for local students."

EVENT HIGHLIGHTS:

- Wine tasting featuring a variety of selections and discounts
- Social networking and community engagement
- Support for local UNICO charitable initiatives including student scholarships

REGISTER TODAY!

Tickets are available online: bit.ly/455rAn0

SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

This event offers a welcoming and enjoyable experience for all. Donations and sponsorships are encouraged and will help amplify UNICO's impact in supporting education, culture, and service both locally and nationally. The Amici Sponsorship is only \$100 and includes one ticket. The Salute Sponsor is \$250 and the Top Shelf Sponsor is \$500.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Contact Daniela LeCras - Chapter Secretary, Greater Westfield UNICO Chapter at unicowestfield@gmail.com.

GREATER WESTFIELD UNICO CHAPTER PRESENTS

WINE Tasting

Taste wines from all over the world and develop your taste buds while enjoying lite fare, supporting student scholarships and local charitable causes. Order wine at a great price for the Easter season!



MARCH 27, 2026 AT 7 PM
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More Information:
<https://bit.ly/455rAn0>





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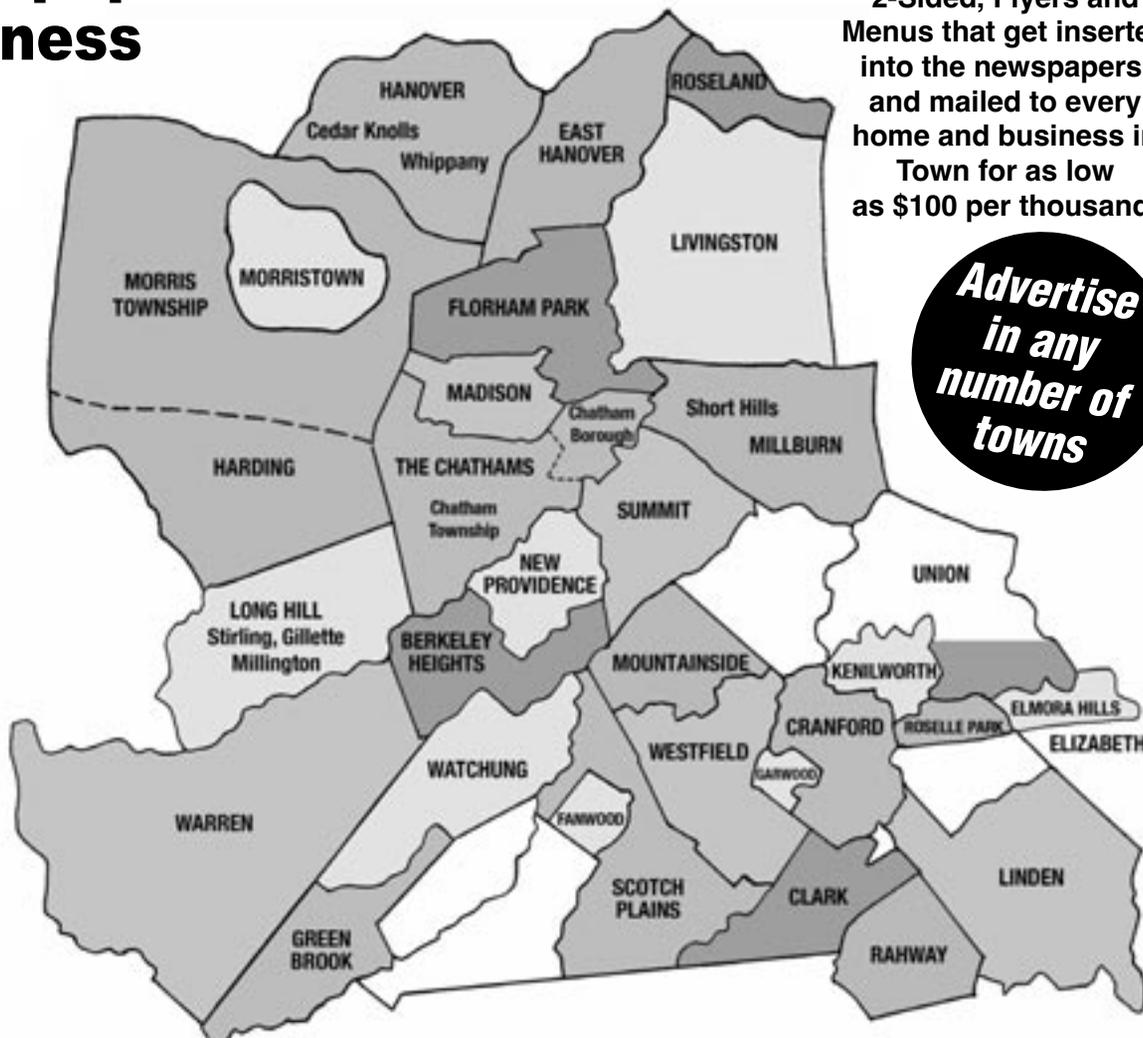
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MARCH SPEAKERS PROGRAM FOR THE SUMMIT AREA OLD GUARD

The Summit Area Old Guard is a social, educational, and recreational organization that serves men of retirement age. We meet Tuesdays, 9:30am, at the New Providence Presbyterian Church located at 1307 Springfield Ave – we encourage visitation, and all are welcome. Our motto is “Come for the Programs. Stay for the Friends.” The organization was founded in 1930. Website address is www.summitoldguard.org.

In March, we will have five speakers:

MARCH 3, STEVE BONDY

On March 3rd, Steve Bondy, the recently retired US Ambassador to Bahrain will speak about the role of the Foreign Service in advancing US policies internationally, describe his 34-year career with the State Department,

and, as a career Middle East specialist, discuss topics, conflicts and trends that are strategic to the interests of the United States in the region. Among other achievements, Steve led 6,000 employees and contractors as COO at the U.S. Embassy in Afghanistan; worked to reconcile armed militias fighting U.S. and local forces in Iraq; assisted Jordan and Israel to negotiate their 1994 peace agreement; created the 2023 U.S.-Bahrain Comprehensive Security Integration and Prosperity Agreement and also confronted Iranian interference and aggression throughout the region.

MARCH 10, RICK HARTLEY

Next, on March 10th, Rick Hartley, local bridge teacher and author, will talk about the

many facets of bridge. He’ll describe his own journey into the land of bridge, highlight celebrities who play bridge with some interesting quotes, discuss the many personal benefits to playing bridge, describe a scandal in an otherwise honorable game, provide an overview of how to play the game, explain why it might be the only “perfect” card game, and where you can learn to play this fascinating game.

MARCH 17, ANAT SHMULOVICH

On Saint Patrick’s Day, March 17th, Anat Shmulovich will be interviewed about her book, “Where the Night Train Ends: How I Survived Russia, Ukraine and the Loss of the Man I Loved”. The book is a personal memoir of her youth in the Soviet Union describing her passion for advancing her education in music as well as the personal challenges and sacrifices she and her family made along the way. It also describes the experience of life in the Soviet Union in the 1960s and the repression and antisemitism experienced by Anat and her family. She will discuss issues raised in the book and read passages that highlight important milestones in her life: “Many people change careers or pursuits multiple times. On the contrary, I haven’t changed careers my entire life. All my life I either taught or played piano, and my only pursuit was to get better in what I do. I feel I haven’t worked a day in my life”.

MARCH 24, MATTHEW WUNDER & SAM KEANE

March 24th will feature Matthew Wunder and Samantha (Sam) Keane who will speak on several investment, tax and estate planning topics. Matthew, a certified financial manager, is a partner at Park Avenue Capital, an investment advisory firm associated with Northwestern Mutual, and Sam is an account manager and also a certified financial planner. They will discuss investment strategies deployed by Park Avenue Capital that are designed to produce attractive after-tax returns with reduced risk for their clients, as well as providing insightful tax, retirement and estate management strategies.

MARCH 31ST, LARRY O'GORMAN

Finally, on March 31st, we will hear from Larry O’Gorman, a Fellow at Nokia Bell Labs Research in Murray Hill, NJ. His current work areas include efficient AI and multimedia analytics. He has also taught multimedia security at Cooper Union and New York University. Larry will describe how technology has contributed to the creation of visual art from the time of Experiments in Art and Technology (E.A.T.) in the 1960s to today’s era of generative AI (artificial intelligence). Over this period, the artist’s role has evolved from solitary creator to orchestrator of immersive viewer experiences to one where the “brushwork” has been ceded to artificial intelligence. Larry will show a sampling of the interactive artworks starting with the Experiments in Art and Technology that involved New York artists working with Bell Labs engineers in the 1960s, and up to present day. With this increasing use of AI technologies, we will ask the question: whose creation is this – human or machine?



(above, l-r) Steve Bondy, Rick Hartley, Anat Shmulovich, Sam Keane, O'Gorman

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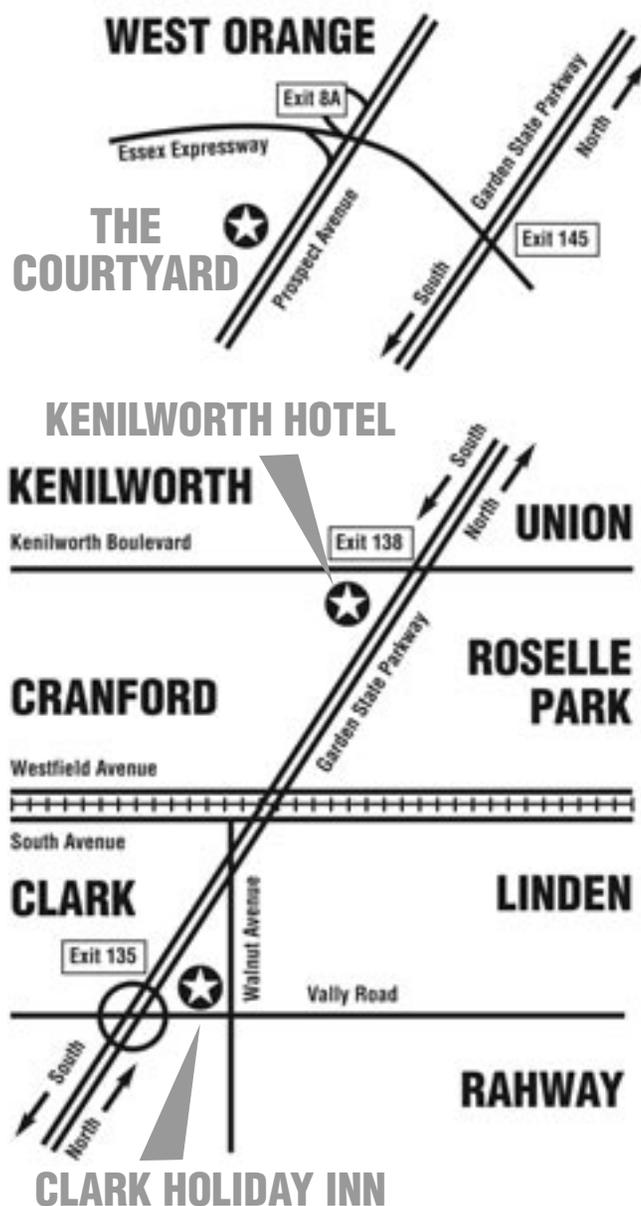
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